

IN MEMORY OF FORMER U.S. REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS DOWNING

HON. JO ANN DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2001

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today I take the opportunity to honor the memory of former United States Representative Thomas Downing, who passed away Tuesday, November 6, 2001.

Tom Downing was a strong and effective representative of Virginia's First District, and served the people well. He was a true friend of the military and an American patriot. Tom was loved by both Democrat and Republican alike. His passion was not about partisan politics—it was about Virginia, and he served the Commonwealth well.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor to represent the First District, which Tom did admirably with class, passion and an unyielding love for country. Representative Downing will be remembered not only for his service in Congress, but for his devoted military service as well.

A true war hero, Tom will be missed, but we will never forget his contributions to Virginia, and to our nation as a whole.

IN MEMORY OF VIRGINIA CONGRESSMAN THOMAS N. DOWNING

HON. J. RANDY FORBES

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2001

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in honoring the memory of a former Member of Congress and pivotal Tidewater politician, Thomas N. Downing.

Congressman Downing represented Tidewater Virginia for eighteen years. He was well-known for his affability with his colleagues and his tenacity in representing his constituents. In particular, he was a staunch supporter of Newport News Shipbuilding, which was and is a cornerstone of the Tidewater economy and of our nation's military readiness. It was Tom Downing's support and assistance that helped to expand and improve that company's ability to contribute so much to national defense and local jobs.

His interest in Newport News Shipbuilding was far more than parochial, it was patriotic. Tom Downing was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute (VMI), a decorated veteran of World War II, and a patriot in the truest sense of the word. He graduated from VMI in 1940 and four years later was commanding mechanized cavalry troops and Army reconnaissance during the liberation of France and sweep across Germany. Tom Downing's personal bravery in rescuing two of his men who were injured during a German ambush earned him the Silver Star.

His legacy in Congress is no less impressive. Newport News Daily Press summed his service in these hallowed halls up best: "[In Congress] he truly hit his stride. He was a natural. Few congressmen have served their constituents better. Just ask the shipyard. Or NASA. Or the watermen. Or any of thousands of individuals and institutions that Mr. Downing

helped during his eight terms. Fiscally conservative? Of course. Integrity? From head to toe. But it was the kindness of the man that most recall about Tom Downing. He liked people and vice-versa. . . ."

His memory lives on in Tidewater's strength and in the lives of those his service touched. Tom Downing will be missed, but not forgotten.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN THOMAS DOWNING

HON. EDWARD L. SCHROCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2001

Mr. SCHROCK Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in honoring the life of Congressman Thomas Downing. Congressman Downing served Virginia's First District as a member of this body from 1959 to 1977, and represented parts of the peninsula and the Eastern Shore that will soon become part of Virginia's Second Congressional District.

Congressman Downing brought with him to Congress a keen, first-hand knowledge of the military and the need for readiness. He was a decorated veteran and hero, having commanded some of the first troops to invade Germany. He was awarded the Silver Star for saving two of his company men after an ambush by German troops.

During his service in Congress, he used this knowledge of the military to help create a military more prepared for combat. He helped Newport News Shipbuilding expand and build the North Yard, which allowed them to build larger ships and to allow for a stronger and more prepared American Navy.

Congressman Downing is perhaps best known for his work following the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King. During the 94th Congress, he served as the Chairman of the Select Committee on Assassinations. His own curiosity in the matters fueled a vigorous investigation and numerous new theories to explain the circumstances surrounding President Kennedy's assassination.

Following his retirement from the House, Congressman Downing continued to serve the Commonwealth of Virginia and our nation, as a member of the Board of Visitors for his alma mater, the Virginia Military Institute, and as President of the Board of Directors of the Mariners' Museum.

Throughout his life and during his service as a member of this House, Congressman Thomas Downing was a true public servant and a great Virginian. Our nation, the Commonwealth, and Hampton Roads will all miss him.

THE PASSING OF FORMER VIRGINIA CONGRESSMAN TOM DOWNING

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2001

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a gracious friend and champion of the citizens of the Virginia

Peninsula, former Congressman of Virginia's First Congressional District, Tom Downing.

Tom was a true gentleman and a great patriot. Representing the Peninsula in Congress from 1959 to 1977, he helped Newport News Shipbuilding gain approval for expansion, which made it easier and more cost effective for the shipyard to construct some of the largest ships in the world.

Tom was also well known for his firm belief that Lee Harvey Oswald did not act alone in assassinating President John Kennedy. He convinced Congress to open a second investigation into the death of the President. While he retired before the panel began its work, Tom remained convinced until his recent death that the footage on the Zapruder film held the answers.

Born in Newport News, Virginia on February 1, 1919, Tom was a graduate of Newport News High School, received a B.S. degree from Virginia Military Institute and a law degree from the University of Virginia. He served in World War II as a combat troop commander of Mechanized Cavalry with Gen. George Patton's Third U.S. Army and commanded the first troops in the Third Army to invade Germany. He received a Silver Star for gallantry in action in France when his unit was ambushed by a German patrol. He rescued two of his men who were wounded during the initial exchange of gunfire.

Tom Downing was re-elected to Congress eight times, with little trouble and often unopposed. During his tenure in Congress, Tom recognized more than anyone the great economic impact the Newport News shipyard had on his district. He twice considered running for higher office—U.S. Senate in 1966 and governor a few years later—but decided against both. This body benefited greatly from those decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I mourn the recent loss of our friend and former colleague. Tom lived his life with exuberance and passion for serving his beloved Virginia. He was a true leader on behalf of all Virginians and Americans.

TRIBUTE TO EDWARD S. GRYCZYNSKI

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2001

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an exceptional leader and American Patriot, LTC Edward S. Gryczynski, U.S. Army, Retired, in recognition of an outstanding career in service to his country.

LTC Gryczynski has a truly distinguished record, including over 22 years of commissioned service in the U.S. Army uniform, which certainly merits special recognition on the occasion of his retirement from his position as Director of Personal Affairs for The Retired Officers Association.

He entered the Army in June 1961 through LaSalle College's ROTC Program and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Air Defense Artillery. In 1965, he transferred to the Adjutant General Corps and was integrated in the regular Army in 1966.

Colonel Gryczynski served in a variety of positions in the administrative and personnel management fields, including assignments as